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ABSTRACT

The California Strategic Plan for Special Education sets specific goals and outcomes for the future in 11 critical areas: early intervention for infants and preschoolers, prevention, assessment, student outcomes and quality indicators, service delivery, education in the least restrictive environment, regionalization for students with low incidence disabilities, transition to adult life, new and effective partnerships with parents, sufficient numbers of qualified special education personnel, and an equitable responsive funding model. The first chapter identifies critical challenges facing special education and the importance of planning, evaluation, and implementation. The second chapter stresses the development of a unified system of education of which special education is a part. Each of the 11 areas is then presented in terms of special goals; planned outcomes for 1990-1991, 1991-1992, and beyond 1992; and statewide strategies and activities. (DB)

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The California Strategic Plan for Special Education

Ours for Tomorrow

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California Department of Education
Specialized Programs Branch
Special Education Division

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The California

Strategic Plan for Special Education

Ours for Tomorrow

Special Education Division
Specialized Programs Branch
California Department of Education

The California Strategic Plan for Special Education

Edited by
Patricia Winget
Joyce Kirk

Designed by
Sandra Cosner

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Preface

The California Strategic Plan for Special Education has taken a comprehensive look at the programs and services offered to individuals with exceptional needs and targets eleven areas where some form of improvement is needed. For each of the areas a goal has been set, statewide strategies and activities identified, and specific outcomes for each year of the plan clearly stated.

The plan has been developed to ensure that we are focusing our efforts and maximizing our funds from the very beginning. This is possible since we have spent the last two or three years developing the plan through statewide task forces, internal working groups, and finally the development of the plan by the Special Education Division. It is because of the commitment of numerous dedicated professionals that the plan should be easy to implement. In fact, many of the areas of the plan are already in implementation phases.

As we developed the plan, it became very obvious that not one person can do it alone. No one organization has the only answer. It is only through our combined efforts and resources that we can achieve for all the children in California a bright and successful life in school and after graduation. You are, therefore, invited to join the Department of Education in refining and implementing the California Strategic Plan for Special Education.

BILL HONIG
Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education

Foreword

This new decade has exciting and challenging opportunities for all of us in education. For those of us who work with individuals with disabilities in special education programs, we have a unique challenge. The '90s will be a time for us to work with our colleagues in general education to better serve all students.

The California Strategic Plan for Special Education is a bold, comprehensive action plan to improve the performance of students with disabilities through program innovation and refinement. The plan calls for a partnership with general education as well as with parents, community members, institutions of higher education, and service providers in the implementation and evaluation of the strategic plan activities. It is an ongoing plan which will be continually reviewed and refined as the Special Education Division conducts research and development in partnership with local schools and districts. The California Strategic Plan for Special Education will build on the successes of local schools, share those excellent ideas with others, and then combine efforts with all who are working for effective education.

This strategic plan sets specific goals and outcomes into 1993 and beyond in 11 critical areas:

Early Intervention for Infants and Preschoolers
Prevention
Assessment
Student Outcomes and Quality Indicators
Service Delivery
Education in the Least Restrictive Environment
Regionalization for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities
Transition to Adult Life
New and Effective Partnerships with Parents
Sufficient Numbers of Qualified Special Education Personnel
An Equitable, Responsive Funding Model

The California Strategic Plan for Special Education is an ambitious agenda for special education which challenges all of us to make significant and positive changes. It is an integral component of the Department's current initiatives focusing on students at risk of school failure— C-LERN (California Local Education Reform Network) and *Every Student Succeeds*— and can provide valuable input to statewide school restructuring efforts.

We invite you to join with us in implementing the California Strategic Plan for Special Education. We hope you will accept the challenge to join in this partnership.

SHIRLEY A. THORNTON, ED.D.
Deputy Superintendent
Specialized Programs Branch
California Department of Education

PATRICK CAMPBELL
Assistant Superintendent
Special Education Division
Specialized Programs Branch
California Department of Education

Acknowledgments

This strategic plan for special education in California is the compilation of the research, expertise, and experience of many individuals. It was developed under the guidance and encouragement of Dr. Shirley A. Thornton, Deputy Superintendent for Specialized Programs.

The initial, beginning stages of the plan began in 1987 when four task forces were formed to address issues surrounding:

- General Education/Special Education Interface
- Program Effectiveness
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Larry P./Crosscultural Assessment

Over 100 stakeholders in special education participated on these task forces which, after 15 months of meetings, compiled their recommendations into four advisory reports to the Special Education Division.

Staff with the Division of Special Education took the reports of the task forces, formed other task forces in additional areas (e.g., Infant/Preschool Matrix), conducted new research (e.g., Low Incidence Study), and was able to synthesize all of the information into this strategic plan.

The plan is not intended to be a static document, but rather, one which will be fluid, will be reviewed and revised as necessary, and one which will be able to stand the test of time. It should become a working document which will be used by individuals and organizations who will be attempting to improve programs and services for students with disabilities in partnership with the Department of Education.

Since the goals, objectives, and activities contained in this strategic plan are the working plan for every unit of the Special Education Division, the plan should also assist administrators, parents, teachers, and advocates to clearly see the direction the Department is taking. We have tried to limit the number of areas of potential interest and will, therefore, attempt to concentrate our energies and funds into these areas. This clarity of direction should be helpful to all.

I am committed to making California's programs for individuals with exceptional needs the best in the nation. I believe this strategic plan will give us the framework and the foundation to make California special education programs and services the best. The degree to which we reach that goal will be entirely dependent upon our ability to plan and work together in making this plan a reality. Your help and assistance is the critical element. I am anxious to work with you to improve programs and services for California's children.

PATRICK CAMPBELL
Assistant Superintendent
Special Education Division
Specialized Programs Branch
California Department of Education

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A Strategic Plan for California Special Education

This strategic plan has been developed in response to some of the pressing questions facing special education in the 1990s:

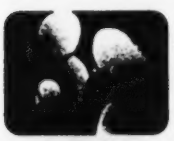
- **Are infants entering the system more medically involved, more technology dependent? Are the infants significantly different than infants who previously entered the system a decade or so ago?**
- **Why is there still an overrepresentation of African-American male students in special education?**
- **Why are there twice as many male students as females in special education?**
- **Is there any movement of students out of special education, or, once enrolled in special education, does a student ever exit the system?**
- **What knowledge and skills do students need to have when they exit special education programs? Are they the right skills to enable students to be able to make choices as to what careers or education programs they might wish to pursue?**
- **Does every student have access to an appropriate placement and program based on individualized needs? Is there a full range of program options available which promote maximum interaction with peers in the least restrictive environment?**
- **Are parents more informed and more involved in the decisions regarding their children now than they were 10 or 15 years ago?**
- **Is the current funding model efficient, equitable, and responsive to meeting the individual needs of students? Do dollars follow students?**
- **Is special education working? What criteria should we use to measure the success of special education programs?**

These are only a few of the many challenges facing special education during this decade. In order to meet these challenges, systematic planning and a coordination of effort and resources will be necessary. This Strategic Plan for Special Education in California presents an opportunity for planning and coordination to occur and offers an active partnership for the education of individuals with exceptional needs during the next five years. This partnership among

classroom teachers, administrators, specialists, other educators, service providers community members, parents, students with disabilities, and staff of the California Department of Education will be able to work together to ensure a free, appropriate, and quality public education for all students. It is a partnership that will prepare students with disabilities for employment, citizenship, independent living, and personal, academic, and social growth.

This plan is designed for the special education community who, with the Department of Education, will work cooperatively towards improving the quality of education for special education students. The plan will provide the framework and foundation for changes to occur over the next several years.

This strategic plan represents a progressive action plan designed to meet today's needs and those of tomorrow by continually improving the quality of educational programs for students with disabilities. The plan addresses eleven areas:



Early intervention for infants and preschoolers:

Transdisciplinary teaming and coordination of assessment and the delivery of services with parent and professional interaction and partnership.

Prevention:

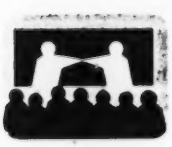
Collaborative efforts by all school staff to enhance the quality of instruction for all students — specifically those who may be at risk of school failure.

Assessment:

A consistent approach that allows for nonbiased assessment, interpretation, and use of information on student performance to be used for effective instructional planning.

Student outcomes and quality indicators:

Expected student outcomes in academic/developmental, personal/social, and economic/community areas with quality indicators defined as impact variables which affect student outcomes. The outcomes and indicators address the questions of program effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.



Service delivery:

Effective ways to educate students collaboratively in a variety of settings and in the core curriculum.

Education in the least restrictive environment:

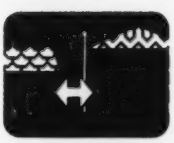
A full array of options for placement and locations where special education services and programs may be provided, based on the assessed needs of the individual child or youth.

Regionalization:

The working together of quality programs and services for students with low incidence disabilities (visual impairments, hearing impairments, severe orthopedic impairments, and those who are deaf-blind).

Transition services:

Coordinated activities for the student within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to post-school activities—postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, adult services, independent living, and community participation.



New and effective partnerships with parents:

Building and maintaining effective collaborative partnerships between parents of children with disabilities and service providers.

Sufficient numbers of qualified special education personnel:

Identifying areas of need and planning cooperatively with other groups to recruit, train, and retain special education teachers and specialists.

An equitable, responsive funding model:

A funding model that reflects sensitivity to providing services to students with a wide variety of needs in multiple educational settings which is equitable, flexible, and easy to understand and administer.

Today's Challenge

There is a demand for an intense examination of how special education is defined and provided in the changing education and social environment. Superintendent Bill Honig, leading California's educational system into preparation for tomorrow, has charged the educational partnership with the task of planning for the future of special education as an integral part of a unified system of education. He cites several factors for this unification:

- Education reform in California's schools has had a catalytic effect on emphasizing the collaboration among those working in categorical programs and with professionals in the general education program.

- The 1989 California Education Summit echoed the need for comprehensive and integrated services and programming for *all* students.
- The categorical reform proposals and the movement to serve at risk have intensified the need to move from a "compliance mode" to one that seeks to create a higher level of quality in programs and services to students with exceptional needs.

Shifting patterns in the state's student population have compounded the need for a strategic planning process. Changes in the family structure, an increase in the number of students who represent a wider variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds have been complicated by the effects of health and social conditions such as poverty, increased drug exposure at early ages, children who have been victims of abuse, increased school dropout rates, and a breakdown in governmental responses to families in need.

The Plan for Tomorrow

It is critical to keep pace with the constantly changing diversity of needs in California, to plan thoughtfully for the future, to define current and future trends, and to develop a long term plan which ensures high quality programs.

A strategic planning process is vital to accomplish this task of developing a long term plan. Special educators are charged, therefore, to maximize the potential of students and enable them to participate more fully in society and to obtain the highest quality of life.

■ *Planning*

Special education began to address strategic issues over four years ago. Educators, parents, and community members joined with staff of the California Department of Education, Special Education Division to focus on specific issues and resolution strategies. Four task forces were formed to address the areas of:

- Program effectiveness
- Least restrictive environment
- Crosscultural assessment
- General education/special education interface

The work of the task forces was summarized in reports published by each work group. The following year, internal work groups were formed in the Department to further develop strategies to resolve issues and planning for the future. Many of the recommendations from the two years of work became part of the special education reform proposal and have already been implemented by local districts across California.

In addition to the reform proposed in special education, there have been a number of other initiatives which have begun to address the needs of students at risk. C-LERN (the California Local Education Reform Network), an initiative implemented by the Specialized

Programs Branch of the Department, is entering its fourth year. C-LERN addresses the structural needs of a school site and district in developing solution strategies which respond to the needs of students at risk. Out of the California Educational Summit, held in December 1989, came a Department initiative focused on prevention, categorical programs integration, and coordination of community services in support of students at risk entitled *Every Student Succeeds*. Both of these initiatives will provide the foundation for program improvement in special education over the next several years.

■ ***Evaluation***

Evaluation is infused throughout the activities of the Strategic Plan at the local, intermediate, and state levels where it plays a key and vital role. The coordinated and comprehensive approach to evaluation will provide those who are implementing the plan and determining the next steps to identify what is working, what characteristics or steps contribute to success, and the various aspects of effectiveness. It is the assessment of results and the examination of process that can give information for directions in policy, program, and procedures. The information and feedback is the foundation for decision making that leads to achievement for special education students.

■ ***Implementation***

While special educators understand that no single educational experience or response, no matter how well designed or accountable, is going to "fix" students with disabilities, special education staff in California have developed a sound and proven process specifically for helping children with disabilities and their parents, specialists, and teachers work with "abilities" and "strengths." The values, principles, and approaches of special education tested over a period of years and in a variety of situation have successfully provided a strong foundation for change. They support exciting opportunities and new directions for the future. These new challenges and responses form the strategic plan for special education as outlined in the following pages.

Special Education within a Unified System

One of the major themes of Education Reform established by Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig is the need for a unified system of education that stresses partnerships.

A Unified System

To promote this collaborative environment, efforts have begun to:

- Update educators on how to work effectively with parents, other community service providers, business and community leaders, and how to increase and improve this collaboration
- Lower fiscal barriers to increase collaboration using the School-Based Coordination Program Act which allows schools to improve coordinated services funded from several categorical sources
- Enable staff and resources in the School Improvement Program, Chapter I Program Improvement, School-Based Coordination Program, Economic Impact Aid, Miller-Unruh Education Reform Reading Act, Gifted and Talented Education, Special Education, and other programs to work together under a locally developed school site plan
- Encourage special education, along with other categorical programs, to take advantage of this collaborative environment and target programs to establish a unified system of education
- Focus improvements within special education on promoting successful access to the core curriculum, improving instruction, and ensuring successful transition of students to employment and quality adult life with an emphasis on accountability

It is this renewed sense of cooperation that has made it possible for special education to operate as a "part of," not "apart from," general education and, at the same time, to stress its unique qualities as a support to general education.

The *Specialness* in Special Education

What is special about special education is its ability to respond to the individual needs of students by designing and providing an instructional program to meet each student's unique needs. It involves parents, educators, and specialists in the assessment and instructional planning process (development of the Individualized Education Program) and the transition planning process (development of the Individualized Transition Program). The same individuals collaborate annually to review the student's progress and determine the appropriateness of the present placement.

The foundation of special education is the ability of a special education teacher to:

- Diagnose and prescribe
- Present curriculum at appropriate instructional levels
- Utilize a variety of instructional strategies
- Teach information utilizing a student's learning strength (learning style, learning rate, learning modality)
- Assess student progress in a variety of ways

■ *The "How"*

All children are capable of learning, yet some students may not be realizing their full potential. At times, students experience difficulties learning because of their disabilities. Students may have disabilities which are physical, mental, or emotional. Once a disability is identified, special education can provide instruction which is individualized to emphasize a student's strength. Such instruction is designed to enable students to acquire strategies to mediate their own learning experiences.

■ *The "What"*

While the "how" accentuates our unique special education contributions to education, the "what" of special education highlights the common ground with general education. It is the decision about "what to teach" that is imbedded in California education policy. There is a clearly identified body of knowledge which children should be taught. This core curriculum encompasses reading/language arts, mathematics, science, history/social science, visual/performing arts, and health and physical education. It prepares students to participate as informed and effective citizens in a democratic society, to function effectively in the world of work, and to realize personal fulfillment.

All students in special education programs and services must have access to the core curriculum. In addition, many of these students need to learn vocationally related skills and/or functional living skills. Exactly which aspects of the core curriculum and which mix of vocational and functional skills the student needs to learn are described in the individualized education program. The program considers the student's disability, the severity of the handicapping condition, and influence of the student/family environment and future goals. All students need a foundation in the core curriculum. Those with the most severe disability should not be excluded from this foundation but should benefit from involvement in the core curriculum instruction as much as possible so that they can participate to the best of their ability in their communities.

■ *The "Where"*

"Where" special education students should receive services masterfully blends the specialness of special education with general education.

Part 30 of the California Education Code and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have a mandate to teach students with special needs in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means students should be taught in a setting as close to the general education classroom as possible.

When an individual needs additional services or different instruction than can be provided in the regular classroom, the student may be educated in other settings for that service or instruction. These settings most frequently should be on the general education campus. If a child must be taught in a separate special class, he or she should engage in as many activities as possible with age-appropriate peers who are non-disabled.

Depending on their need, students receive special instruction through: special day classes (SDC) in which the students spend the majority of the day; the Resource Specialist Program (RSP); and through special designated instruction and services such as speech therapy (DIS). Some students, especially students who are deaf, blind, severely orthopedically handicapped or those who are deaf-blind, need specialized instruction that can only be provided efficiently in separate, highly specialized facilities. The state schools for students who are deaf and who are blind provide educational opportunities for these students. The decision of where to provide services is made by the IEP team with the parent as a fully participating member.

■ *The "Who"*

The "who" of special education encompasses not only the children served, but also the teachers and specialists who provide services. There must be an adequate supply of trained professional staff to work with special education children and their families in order to provide the highest quality programs for all of California's children. Special education students need and deserve teachers and specialists who are adequately trained and skilled and knowledgeable in specific disabilities. Identification of teacher shortages and surpluses in geographic regions and credential areas is taking place. Recruitment of additional qualified staff to meet the continuing demands of the future is being planned. Providing additional training for current special educators and for teachers from other disciplines wishing to become special educators is a key component of the special education strategic process to ensure that California's students succeed.

Children and youth have common sets of needs or issues which can be effectively addressed within certain age groups. Those involved in strategic planning for special education have considered services to students in three broad categories: (1) Infant/Preschool-aged children, (2) K-12 school-aged students, and (3) Transitioning students, those being prepared to move beyond school to adult life and employment.

INFANTS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Early childhood special education for infants and preschoolers with exceptional needs differs significantly from the typical models used in K-12 special education programs and services. The needs of children under the age of five and their families are complex and call for responsive, comprehensive, and collaborative family-focused service systems among many state agencies. Typically, families of young children with exceptional needs are involved with a variety of services including home and center-based special education. It is essential that program staff and service providers collaborate with those who work in health, social, developmental, mental health, and child development programs that provide services for these children. New federal and state legislation has charged the service delivery system to promote developmentally appropriate services adapted to the young child's special needs while stressing an intense level of family involvement and support, transdisciplinary training, and interagency collaboration.

Over the past few years, services have expanded to young children with exceptional needs and their families. At the same time advances in medical technology and other societal factors have contributed to a change in the characteristics of this young population resulting in more medically fragile children being served. The families of these children are also more diverse representing a variety of languages, cultures, and family structures.

The knowledge base of research and effective practices in early childhood special education is rapidly growing and changing. Strategic planning and thinking are dynamic tools to benefit those who work in this vital area.

K-12 SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS

Special education students in the K-12 program have and will continue to benefit from educational reform. Collaborative approaches will be emphasized, especially at school-based coordination program sites. This collaborative effort will bring together the special education specialists with the general education teacher. This will be accomplished through collaborative consultation and forms of cooperative teaching.

Future opportunities for involvement will proceed through special education's continued key activity and support in the Department's C-LERN initiative. As districts and school sites begin to address the structural changes necessary to provide quality programs for all students, it is expected that special education will also be discussed and will become a vital partner in ensuring the success of all students at a school site. In addition, opportunities for enrichment experiences in the core curriculum, rather than strictly remedial

programs, are being created through special education's involvement in the *Every Student Succeeds* (ESS) initiative that will be piloting effective programs for students at risk.

The Special Education Division will continue to research and develop the best practices available in the areas of:

- Prevention
- Ongoing assessment
- Curriculum
- Instructional delivery systems
- Student outcomes/quality indicators
- Transition

The Special Education Division will be identifying best practices in the above-mentioned areas and will develop a network of districts which are currently providing services to students with disabilities in innovative ways. It is also the intent of the Division to form a series of networks between these innovative districts so that a statewide dissemination effort can be accomplished over the next several years. The results of these research and development areas will provide the needed data for program improvement in C-LERN and ESS sites.

TRANSITIONING STUDENTS

Transition deals with preparing students for adult life and employment. It is an ongoing educational process that begins early and ends at school exit. Success is measured by the outcomes of students after they leave school.

In California transition services are directed at all children with disabilities—infants, preschoolers, and school-aged children. Transition services promote movement from school to post-school activities and are based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. These services include instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and acquisition of daily living skills and functional evaluation, when appropriate.

Employment is now a realistic goal for all individuals, including those with severe disabilities. The success of strategies like supported employment and WorkAbility demonstrate that individuals can be productive and integrated into a competitive work environment. Equitable residential, social, and community adult life options will become available to individuals with disabilities as special education programs and services (including transition) continue to expand and improve.

Initiating the Plan: Goals, Strategies, Outcomes

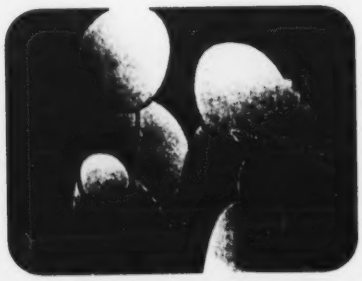
The Strategic Plan for Special Education has targeted eleven areas for research and development. These are areas for cooperative efforts, for all who are involved and concerned with students with disabilities. Research and development sites will focus on these areas and conduct the research necessary to bring about improvements in the program.

The staff of the Special Education Division have established a series of plans for implementation of activities and strategies which will accomplish the goals of the California Strategic Plan for Special Education. These implementation plans will be reflected in the annual objectives of the Division and the allocation of resources and tasks that will guide the staff in their work. Each year, a new implementation plan will be prepared for the ensuing year, reflecting the successes of previous efforts and the new situations and conditions that exist at that time.

The following pages contain more about each of the eleven areas. Each of the areas has a stated goal, a brief description of the rationale and issues that lead to the goal, various strategies and activities that, along with others, will help to achieve the targeted goal, and a series of outcomes for a three-year period and beyond.

Early Intervention

GOAL:
Early childhood special education will be available to all infants and preschoolers with exceptional needs and their families in order to prepare them for school success and to maximize their potential.



At the heart of infant and preschool special education is the philosophy that early intervention has a significant positive impact on the lives of young children with exceptional needs and their families. Early childhood special education services must be based on effective practices that address young children, their exceptional needs in the context of their families and culture, and provided by a transdisciplinary team through interagency collaboration. The service delivery models for young children with special needs are by necessity founded on collaboration among families, early childhood special education team members, child-care programs, and other agencies.

An interagency coordination effort to address the needs of disabled infants and their families has begun in California as the state has participated in the planning phase as authorized by the federal law, P.L. 99-457, Part H.

The same federal law, P.L. 99-457 (through Part B, Section 619), has also prompted California to implement legislation in the state which established standards for services for all preschoolers. Services have been provided to an estimated 18,000 additional preschoolers over the past three years through an expansion of eligibility criteria for preschoolers.

The key ingredients of infant preschool programs are early identification of the unique needs of young children and their families, transdisciplinary teaming, and interagency coordination. The recent Department report *Here They Come: Ready or Not* identifies similar issues in the preparation of students entering public schools. Building on these basic concepts, quality services for infants and preschoolers and their families will be seen in:

- Legislation that mandates early intervention and permanently establishes preschool services for all eligible children and their families
- Standards defining "age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate services"
- A policy on least restrictive environment (LRE) which

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Development and provision of training and resource materials to support effective practices statewide.

▲ Development of a least restrictive environment (LRE) policy for infants and preschoolers.

▲ Review of preschool eligibility criteria in preparation for a full mandate for service.

▲ Encouragement of collaboration with local program operators to develop a funding model that (1) supports simplified alternatives, (2) establishes effective practices, and (3) incorporates an interagency evaluation component.

▲ Participation in state and local interagency planning and coordination efforts.

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Development of an interagency legislative proposal that mandates collaborative early intervention services for all eligible infants and their families.

▲ Establishment of five research and development projects in early childhood special education to pilot an alternative services and funding model.

emphasizes appropriate placement and services
- Interagency coordination through training, materials, and agreements
- An accountability system that ensures program quality
- Training and resource assistance to programs and personnel
- A simplified funding model that promotes more efficient use of resources
- Training resources and materials in the areas of: transdisciplinary assessment and service delivery, family professional collaboration, transition, interagency collaboration, and transdisciplinary services.

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Collaborate with the Department of Developmental Services and other state agencies to meet requirements of Part H of P.L. 99-457 for comprehensive, coordinated, interagency, family-focused early intervention services for infants and their families.**
- **Provide access to training and resource assistance for families to enable their involvement in quality services to children ages birth through five.**
- **Provide training and technical assistance to staff and administrators providing services to children ages birth through five in the areas of:**
  - **developmentally-appropriate services adapted to the young child's special needs**
  - **family-focused services addressing California's cultural diversity**
  - **transdisciplinary assessment and services**
  - **transition**
  - **coordinated interagency services**
  - **providing a full range of program options including home and community-based services for children ages birth through five.**
- **Establish a system of accountability which ensures program quality and incorporates an early childhood special education component into the existing monitoring process.**
- **Create a birth-to-five system with an appropriate funding model and service standards that maximizes federal, state, and local resources.**

The growing numbers of eligible infants, preschoolers, and their families who require a range of services add pressure to an educational system that is already stretched. The evidence is clear that programs providing appropriate early childhood special education and related services for infants and preschoolers with special needs and their families reduce the number of children needing help later and decrease the intensity of needed services.

It is the powerful combination of research and best practices in early childhood education for young children that leads to the Strategic Plan goal: *Early childhood special education will be available to all infants and preschoolers with exceptional needs and their families in order to prepare them for school success and to maximize their potential.*

▲ Development of outcomes and quality indicators for infants and young children ages birth-five.

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Establishment of a coordinated interagency early intervention system that provides a range of services to meet the diverse needs of these populations.

▲ Development of a legislative proposal that ensures adequate funding for continuation of established preschool services for all eligible children and their families.

▲ Development and implementation of individualized family service plan for all eligible Part H infants and their families as appropriate under new legislation.

▲ Refinement and phase-in of an alternative service delivery and funding model based on recommendations of the research and development sites.

Prevention

GOAL:
All California students will have access to a rich core curriculum and to school-based services which maximize their learning strengths in order to support effective individualized services within the classroom.

Collaborative efforts by all school staff to enhance the quality of instruction for all students in the general education classroom is the focus of prevention strategies. In this area, teachers will interact with other teachers and specialists in:

- Designing and implementing a rich core curriculum
- Developing a broad array of instructional strategies to empower students to improve their own learning
- Developing classroom management strategies

Prevention strategies are more than good teaching. They include organizational and structural interventions such as site-level examinations of school culture, climate, and curriculum; documentation of intervention attempts; and follow-up monitoring of pupil performance. Effective prevention activities will result in greater success of students in the general classroom with:

- Access for all students to a rich core curriculum
- Responsibility among general, special, and other categorical educators to ensure the success of all students
- Screening student achievement in relation to the core curriculum
- Analysis of activities and behaviors within the social structure of the classroom
- Identification and organization of resources at the school site to utilize the most appropriate combination of personnel and instructional settings for individuals and/or groups of students
- Application of appropriate interventions based on achievement screening, classroom analysis, and resource identification to appropriately modify the core curriculum and increase the teachers' repertoire of instructional strategies within the classroom
- Utilization of cognitive processing skills by all students in the general education classroom

General educators have the major responsibility for ensuring that students receive a rich core curriculum and succeed in the classroom. The idea of a team approach to help students at school is not new. Schools over the last five years began to recognize the need for a shared partnership by all staff within the context of a unified educa-

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Development of training manuals which facilitate the organization of resources at the school site to utilize the most appropriate combination of personnel and instructional settings for individuals and/or groups of students.

▲ Participation of special education in C-LERN sites throughout California as well as ESS sites.

▲ Completion of regional trainings, workshops, teleconferences related to prevention strategies.

▲ Completion of evaluations regarding effective programs and strategies.

▲ Establishment of a network of site practitioners who promote effective prevention strategies.

tional system. One effective approach adopted is the use of Student Study Teams which have been functioning effectively in many schools. These teams develop as educators respond to the need to assist students who are not progressing satisfactorily and to develop a systematic problem- solving approach to identify and intervene with students identified as "at risk." These teams include parents, teachers, administrators, specialists, and often the student. They all participate in an organized group process which clarifies the problems and concerns, generates intervention strategies, organizes the local resources and holds the participants accountable. The goals of the Student Study Team are to help the teacher become more effective with individual students.

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Participate in the continued implementation of *C-LERN (California Local Education Reform Network)* and the development of *ESS (Every Student Succeeds)*.**
- **Promote collaborative activities between general and special education through a Department initiative that provides information and training in concepts of school-based management which includes Student Study Team + (SST+), school leadership teams, teacher assistance teams, and School Site Councils.**
- **Promote special education inclusion in School-Based Coordination Programs at all schools.**
- **Identify exemplary prevention activities.**
- **Train general and special educators in ways to modify instruction and teach students to mediate their own learning.**
- **Disseminate information about effective prevention strategies.**
- **Provide assistance to SELPA and LEA staff who are beginning to implement prevention strategies.**
- **Network districts to increase mutual assistance and communication around common issues and concerns.**
- **Refine, based on evaluation, the strategies which have been developed and implemented.**

However, in addition to the student study team concept, the Department is recommending that districts consider the adoption of a Student Study Team "plus" concept. The "plus" concept would encourage the direct assessment and intervention of programs and/or services with a student prior to a student being referred to any categorical program. It requires that an intervention be tried immediately when an individual student begins to fall behind in school.

The role of special educators is to support the general education teachers' efforts to ensure student success in their classrooms.

It is the result of these early steps and commitment to shared responsibility for all students which leads to the Strategic Plan goal: *All California students will have access to a rich core curriculum and to school-based services which maximize their learning strengths in order to support effective individualized services within the classroom.*

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Continued participation of special education in C-LERN sites throughout California as well as ESS sites.

▲ Continued trainings related to prevention strategies.

▲ Continued evaluations of effective programs and strategies.

▲ Extended network of site practitioners who promote effective prevention strategies.

▲ Development of a legislative proposal to institutionalize prevention strategies.

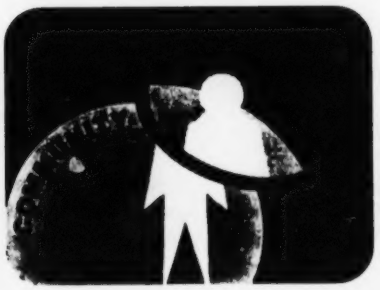
1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Continued participation in all aspects of developing effective prevention strategies.

▲ Legislation secured to institutionalize prevention strategies.

Assessment

GOAL:
To develop a transdisciplinary assessment process which (1) utilizes data from a full range of sources (home, school, and community), (2) supports instructional planning, and (3) determines which students could benefit from special education services without overrepresentation or underrepresentation of any specific ethnic group.



There are three major issues in the area of assessment in Special Education at the present time:

1) What is the purpose of assessment, how much assessment is necessary, and how can assessment results be linked with instructional planning?

2) Are the tests being used with students nonbiased and able to accurately assess California's crosscultural population?

3) Is the eligibility criteria currently used in California effective, efficient, and equitable?

It is becoming a popular belief that assessment should be an ongoing process that begins with parents and teachers in the regular classroom. In order to effect this change in philosophy, it will be necessary to assist parents and teachers in acquiring the skills necessary to redirect assessment personnel from a pure "testing" role into one of collaboration and to conduct assessments in a variety of locations: home, school, and the community. It will be critical that the tests, procedures and practices utilized by everyone are nonbiased and are attentive to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of students.

Once a student's problem has been identified, it is important that an intervention, or a series of interventions, begin immediately and continue for a period of time. If interventions are unsuccessful over time, then the child can be referred to special education (if appropriate) for further assessment. The information from this extended assessment process would be used for instructional planning purposes, not exclusively for program eligibility.

The results of ongoing assessments (which are conducted throughout the year) should be shared at the annual review meeting of a student enrolled in special education. The data acquired from these ongoing assessments form the basis for discussions around the goals

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Development of alternative referral processes for general education which maximizes all previously accumulated data for a student being referred to for special education assessment.

▲ Research of alternative referral processes and eligibility criteria at model sites.

▲ Development of alternative nonbiased assessment practices and procedures for special education.

▲ Dissemination of products from the state supported grant on alternative assessment strategies and curriculum (Project OLE').

▲ Development of training manuals on alternative assessment strategies and models.

▲ Establishment of a network of site practitioners who promote nonbiased assessment practices.

and objectives for the student. As a result of strengthening the annual review process in the area of assessment, the state will be able to redefine the triannual review process for students.

A variety of models, practices, and procedures need to be developed in this area. Through research activities, the networking of interested personnel, and the development of best practices the result will be:

- Early identification by parents and regular classroom teachers of students not meeting success in school
- Involvement of assessment personnel in regular classrooms, the home, and the community
- Ongoing assessment of students
- Assessment results linked to instructional planning
- Eligibility criteria which are performance-based, not numerically-based
- Assessment practices and procedures which will address the cultural and linguistic needs of students and are bias-free
- Strengthening the annual review process for students
- Redesigning the triannual review process for students

This is reflected in the Strategic Plan goal: *To develop a transdisciplinary assessment process which (1) utilizes data from a full range of sources (home, school, and community), (2) supports instructional planning, and (3) determines which students could benefit from special education services without overrepresentation or underrepresentation of any specific ethnic group.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Analyze current assessment practices related to: (a) purpose of assessment, (b) degree of comprehensiveness of assessment, (c) role of assessment personnel, (d) linkage of assessment data to instructional planning, (e) how assessment is used to monitor student progress, (f) how the assessment process incorporates a wide range of data collected prior to referral by general educators and parents.**
- **Review existing eligibility criteria, including limitations of current criteria, and develop alternatives if necessary.**
- **Develop a criteria for models and procedures of assessment that is based on the analysis of current practices.**
- **Identify development sites to develop, test, refine, and assist in evaluation of feasibility and effectiveness of alternative eligibility criteria and assessment strategies.**

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Continued research on exemplary practices for referral procedures and nonbiased assessment at expanded sites.

▲ Continued research on alternative eligibility criteria for special education at expanded sites.

▲ Continued trainings in techniques and strategies for nonbiased assessment strategies.

▲ Extended network of site practitioners who promote nonbiased assessment.

▲ Development of legislative proposal to institutionalize nonbiased assessment strategies and alternative eligibility criteria for special education.

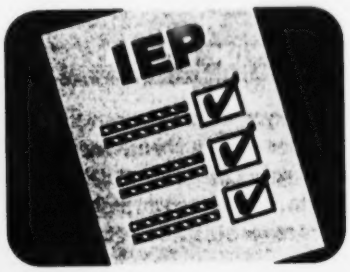
1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Continued participation in all aspects of developing alternative eligibility criteria for special education and nonbiased assessment procedures.

▲ Legislation secured to institutionalize alternative eligibility criteria and nonbiased assessment procedures.

Student Outcomes and Quality Indicators

GOAL:
California children, ages 0-21, will receive quality special education services and instruction that lead to clearly identified outcomes in early childhood development, academic or developmental performance, personal and social skills, community living skills, functional skills, and/or employment-related competencies.



There exist few accepted or agreed upon outcome criteria for students in special education programs and services at the present time. Generally, parents and teachers rely on assessment information, the IEP, and curriculum and grade guidelines to provide a measure of success for each student.

Variables which potentially effect student outcomes (quality indicators) have not been established for special education in California. In fact, some standards have been established based on funding availability, rather than program effectiveness.

Parents, educators, specialists, administrators, and community members need, and have a right to, special education programs and services that are effective, efficient, and equitable for all students. With limited funds for special education, it is critical to ensure that quality standards are developed and utilized in comparing programs across California.

To accomplish these objectives, educators, Division staff, and others will standardize the collection of information regarding special education students in the following areas: academic/developmental, personal/social, and economic/community.

Data will be collected the first year from resource specialists. In subsequent years, information will be collected from special day class teachers. From the data analysis, targets of expected student outcomes will be established at different intervals:

Preschool	Middle School	Postsecondary
Elementary	High School	

It is important to match the skills students possess when they exit special education to the skills necessary to attend a postsecondary, academic or training program and needed to attain meaningful employment. The test of program effectiveness will be the follow-up of individuals three to five years after leaving school to determine their involvement in work, school, leisure, and success in postsecondary education, and competitive employment.

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Collection and analysis of student performance levels for resource specialist program (RSP) students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 12 in the areas of academic/developmental, personal/social, community/economic.

▲ Establishment of performance targets for students as they transition between preschool, elementary, middle school, high school and postsecondary.

▲ Development of process indicators to determine process effectiveness and efficiency.

▲ Development of quality indicators for controlled and uncontrolled variables.

▲ Development of a plan to include data elements listed in previous outcome into the special education student level database.

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Analysis of second year of RSP data collected related to student outcomes.

▲ Analysis of first year data collected related to student outcomes in special day class programs.

▲ Analysis of data representing achievement of age level performance targets.

Determining how well special education processes are working at a school will be addressed through the establishment of standards in eleven process areas and the implementation of a "self evaluation" system. The Department will establish the standards with local school sites completing self evaluations. Validated items will be included in the School Improvement Program reviews as well as in the Superintendent's report card.

Quality indicators offer LEAs criteria or variables which can be used when assessing programs. For example, if student performance levels decline it is important for an LEA to determine the causes. Quality indicators can provide rationale for either lower or higher performance scores.

The elements discussed—student outcomes, program effectiveness, process effectiveness and quality indicators—are critical components of evaluation. The use of the student level database as the major system for collecting data will be instrumental for LEAs as programs are analyzed. Collectively, data from the student-level database will provide the State with the information needed to document that California students are receiving quality services and instruction.

In response to the various aspects of effectiveness the Department has adopted the following goal: *California children, ages 0-21, will receive quality special education services and instruction that lead to clearly identified outcomes in early childhood development, academic or developmental performance, personal and social skills, community living skills, functional skills, and/or employment-related competencies.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Collect data on student outcomes for special education students at grade levels 3, 6, 8, and 12 across all program settings through a process that incorporates field based input in (1) development of a survey document, (2) reliability testing, and (3) finalization of Special Education Division standards.**
- **Establish a system for program processes which would result in indicators that can be infused into the School Improvement Program Quality Review documents and the Superintendent's Report Card.**
- **Develop quality indicators for controlled and uncontrolled variables.**
- **Incorporate student outcomes and quality indicators in the Special Education Student Level Data Base to facilitate data collection for evaluative purposes.**

▲ Analysis of data collected related to quality indicators for special education programs.

▲ Adoption of plan to incorporate process indicators in local district report cards, school improvement programs, and in the Superintendent's Report Card.

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Institutionalization and continued analysis of student outcomes for special education students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 12 (revisions as necessary).

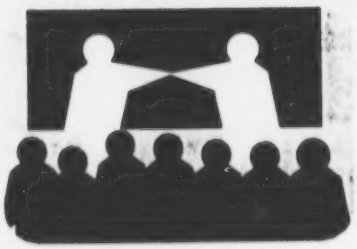
▲ Institutionalization and continued analysis of quality indicators for special education programs (revisions as necessary).

▲ Collection of student outcomes data and quality indicator data via the special education student-level database system.

▲ Institutionalization of process indicators in school improvement program.

Service Delivery

GOAL:
California children, ages 0-21, will receive special education services which provide education in the core curriculum in a variety of settings; are coordinated with other education, health, social, and employment services; and are responsive to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background of each child.



The exciting and innovative technologies and strategies for instruction that are available to teachers and other specialists today make teaching a rewarding and positive force for student learning. There are increased demands on those who work with individuals with exceptional needs, whether it is in the general classroom or in a special education setting. As new goals are set for special education students, there is a need to develop new ways to use the wide array of options for special education services delivery. The strategic plan will result in:

- Increased variety of choices of instructional settings and service delivery models that stress communication and collaboration among special educators, general educators, specialists, and parents
- Increased numbers of general and special education staff skilled and trained in the effective and appropriate use of all the options for service delivery and in strategies and techniques to teach the core curriculum
- The use of assessment information in the planning process to select the most appropriate and effective option of service delivery and methodologies to teach the core curriculum
- Rich core curriculum for all students which is taught effectively and results in increased student mediation of the learning experience
- Improved cognitive processing of academic information by each student
- New roles and new techniques for collaboration and communication for school personnel including general and special education teachers, administrators, and other specialists

Teaching has traditionally been an isolated activity between one teacher and many students. The closed classroom door has hampered

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Development of alternative service delivery technical manual for use by districts desiring to implement alternative service delivery models.

▲ Provision of regional trainings to educators and parents regarding ways to provide alternative services to special education students.

▲ Research the various alternative service delivery strategies through the Department's C-LERN sites and ESS projects and Division research and development projects.

▲ Analysis of evaluation results from the research conducted.

▲ Establishment of a network of site practitioners who promote the concept of providing alternative service delivery systems.

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Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Provide interactive satellite teleconferences, regional seminars, and training workshops to special educators, general education staff, specialists, and administrators to build the skills necessary to implement the model and methods at local sites.**
- **Disseminate detailed strategies to schools, districts, and to teacher training programs in California to provide guidance and information to those who are interested in implementing alternative service delivery models.**
- **Work collaboratively with school sites and various institutions of higher education to develop, test, refine, train, and disseminate effective models of alternative service delivery.**
- **Work with Department of Education staff to infuse appropriate elements of the alternative methods of service delivery in C-LERN and *Every Student Succeeds* (ESS) implementation.**
- **Work collaboratively with institutions of higher education to develop and implement curriculum that will train new teachers in alternative methods of service delivery.**
- **Develop appropriate policy, as necessary, to provide for effective implementation of alternative methods of service delivery by working with personnel from local education agencies, professional organizations, and parent groups.**
- **Identify legal requirements and methods to implement alternative methods of service delivery in a compliant method through waivers and/or school-based coordination.**

communication and cooperative efforts among those who work with students with difficult learning needs. Redundant and conflicting instruction is just one result of this lack of collaborative effort.

To overcome this traditional barrier to success, the Strategic Plan sets the goal: *California children, ages 0-21, will receive special education services which provide education in the core curriculum in a variety of settings; are coordinated with other education, health, social, and employment services; and are responsive to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background of each child.*

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Continued research into the different models of alternative service delivery for special education.

▲ Continued trainings on techniques or models of alternative service delivery for special education.

▲ Extended networks of site practitioners who promote the concept providing alternative service delivery systems.

▲ Development of legislative proposal to institutionalize alternative service delivery models.

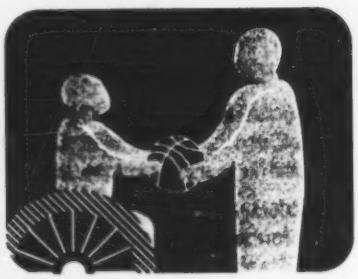
1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Continued participation in all aspects of promoting alternative service delivery models.

▲ Legislation secured to institutionalize alternative service delivery models.

Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

GOAL:
Individuals with exceptional needs will receive education and other services that they require in a location or setting that promotes the maximum interaction with age-appropriate peers without disabilities, and participation in the local community.



Educators have a responsibility to ensure that each individual who has a disability has the maximum interaction with age-appropriate peers without disabilities, and the opportunity to participate in their educational and neighborhood community. Placement, however, is not a static decision, made once and then rarely reconsidered. Rather, the determination of the least restrictive environment (LRE) is a fluid process that is constantly in need of examination, at least annually, based on the assessed needs of the individual and progress made.

To accomplish this outcome, the activities of the strategic plan will result in:

- Local general education school administrators and staff assuming their responsibility to educate all the children within their community
- Increased options for educational placements including regionalized services, cooperative efforts by schools and districts to assist each other in providing the options, and interagency agreements that allow for services to be provided in nontraditional settings
- At least annually, an examination of each individual's placement based on the individual's needs and achievement with an attempt to move the placement closer to the general education setting
- Educators and service providers acquiring new and additional tools, interventions, and strategies to allow them to serve students in settings that provide increased participation in the general education program
- Concern for the individual's right to be a full member of the community and a respect for the dignity and potential of each individual.

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Dissemination of policy document *Guidelines for Implementing the Least Restrictive Environment* for special education students and related training materials to all SELPAs and county offices and to requesting parents, IHE staff and districts.

▲ Completion of regional trainings, workshops, and satellite teleconferences on LRE issues and implementation strategies.

▲ Completion of state-sponsored training programs in 150 districts.

▲ Participation in C-LERN and ESS sites implementing LRE best practices and policies.

▲ Development and piloting of funding model which supports LRE concepts.

California's commitment to serving all its students in the neighborhood school has been clear for the past decade or longer. Many districts have realized full inclusion of those with disabilities while ensuring that the individuals are receiving the necessary services and programs. Other districts have explored avenues to promote the array of options for education in the least restrictive environment. The issue is not just one for educators. The community, health and service agencies, parents, and others all have a responsibility to provide services where the individuals are, not to demand that individuals come to where the services can most easily be delivered or where they have always been provided.

To promote and provide education in the least restrictive environment for all of California's children with disabilities, the Strategic Plan sets the goal: *Individuals with exceptional needs will receive education and other services that they require in a location or setting that promotes the maximum interaction with age-appropriate peers without disabilities, and participation in the local community.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Provide intensive training and assistance to special educators, general education staff, specialists, parents, and administrators in the various models for LRE, the skills and methods necessary to implement the models at their sites, and the systems change approach, including training opportunities such as: interactive satellite teleconferences, regional seminars, statewide training programs, and Special Education Innovation Institute sessions .**
- **Disseminate the *Guidelines for Implementing the Least Restrictive Environment* for special education students to schools, districts, teacher training programs, and parents in California to provide guidance and information.**
- **Provide leadership in promoting an annual review of each student's needs in an attempt to move the placement closer to the general education setting.**
- **Encourage placement decisions based on assessment findings, goals and objectives, and parental involvement and choice.**
- **Work with Department of Education staff to infuse appropriate elements of LRE in C-LERN and *Every Student Succeeds* (ESS).**
- **Work with districts desiring to participate in state-sponsored training and assistance programs.**
- **Develop a funding model that supports the LRE concept.**
- **Work collaboratively with various institutions of higher education to develop and implement curriculum that will train new teachers in the concept of LRE.**
- **Provide leadership to promote the right of each individual to be a full member of the community with respect for the dignity and the potential of each individual.**

▲ Establishment of a network of school districts who promote and are implementing best practices of LRE concepts and policies.	**1991-1992 Outcomes** ▲ Continued investigation using pilots of funding models which support LRE concepts. ▲ Continued training and dissemination of materials on LRE issues and implementation strategies.	**1992-Beyond Outcomes** ▲ Institutionalization of funding model which supports LRE concepts.

Regionalization *for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities*

GOAL:
Students with low incidence disabilities will receive effective and equitable quality programs and services designed to meet their individual educational needs. Teachers, specialists, support staff, administrators, parents, and community members will receive sufficient training to ensure the types and levels of service are appropriate to meet the unique needs of these students.

California has had a long-standing tradition of providing services to students with low incidence disabilities (hearing impaired, visually impaired, deaf-blind, and severely orthopedically handicapped). However, questions have risen over the past several years regarding the effectiveness and equity of services provided to these students. During the 1988/89 school year, the Special Education Division contracted with San Francisco State University to conduct a study regarding the services being provided. Major issues identified in this study have led to the following outcomes for this strategic plan area:

- Administrators of low incidence programs will become more knowledgeable about the unique educational needs of students with low incidence disabilities
- Assessments of students with low incidence disabilities will be comprehensive and the results consistently related to students' individualized education programs
- Assessments will be conducted by trained and knowledgeable personnel
- The severe shortage of specialists and support personnel who are properly trained will be reduced
- A full range of program options and services will be available for students with low incidence disabilities, particularly in rural areas
- Specialized inservice education for parents, staff, and administrators will be available
- The guidelines for low incidence programs will be disseminated and training provided in their use
- The unique educational needs of infants and preschool children with low incidence disabilities will be addressed

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Director's Forum conducted for administrators, specialists, parents, and community members to develop specific action plans to address administrative, assessment, instructional, and personnel development issues identified in the low incidence study.

▲ Development of comprehensive, three-year strategic plan which incorporates input from and has the broad-based support of the field, the legislature, and control agencies.

▲ Resolution secured from the State Legislature which expresses the need to address the serious problems relating to the education of students with low incidence disabilities through significant changes in the current service delivery system.

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Funding and other resources obtained which are necessary to conduct research in the development of regionalized low incidence cooperatives to provide more effective programs and more equitable access to ensure students have appropriate programs and services in the least restrictive environment.

▲ Funding and other resources secured which are necessary to conduct research in preservice and inservice education which meet

- Caseloads and class sizes in some programs and services will be appropriate to the needs of students
- The specialized curriculum needs (including vocational education) of students with low incidence disabilities will be addressed in order to provide access to the core curriculum
- The effectiveness of low incidence programs will be evaluated with a focus on student outcomes

In response to the findings from the study, and in an effort to ensure that quality services are being provided to low incidence students, the Special Education Division conducted a two-day forum in the summer of 1990 and a follow-up one-day forum in January 1991 to develop a strategic plan which could resolve concerns regarding these programs. The outcomes in the plan are summarized below.

To ensure that effective and equitable programs are offered to low incidence students in California is the Strategic Plan goal: *Students with low incidence disabilities will receive effective and equitable quality programs and services designed to meet their individual educational needs. Teachers, specialists, support staff, administrators, parents, and community members will receive sufficient training to ensure that the types and levels of service are appropriate to meet the unique needs of these students.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Conduct a forum to review, prioritize and develop solution strategies for identified weaknesses in programs and services offered to students with low incidence disabilities (hearing impaired, deaf-blind, visually impaired, severely orthopedically impaired).**
- **Develop a strategic plan to regionalize services, programs, and trainings for students, parents, teachers, specialists, and community members associated with low incidence disabilities.**
- **Continue to revise, update, and disseminate guidelines for each of the low incidence disability areas.**
- **Provide statewide training throughout California in areas of need as identified in local needs assessments and as stated in each of the low incidence guidelines published by the California Department of Education.**
- **Assist the field in implementing the guidelines as published by the California Department of Education.**

the specialized needs of those providing services to students with low incidence disabilities.

▲ Development of specialized curriculum materials and curriculum-based assessment materials which will ensure the equal access of low incidence disabilities.

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Evaluation of the effectiveness of research programs.

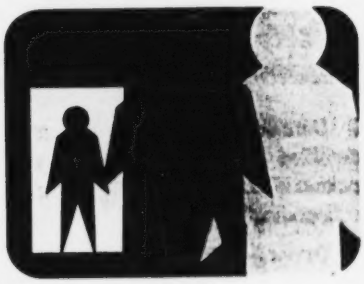
▲ Legislation and funding obtained for ongoing statewide implementation of the Low Incidence Strategic Plan.

▲ Dissemination of curriculum materials and training.

▲ Development and implementation of an ongoing system for the provision of technical assistance at the local, regional, and state levels.

Transition to Adult Life

GOAL:
California students with disabilities, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background, will be prepared academically, socially, and vocationally to become fully employed, contributing members of society and to enjoy an appropriate quality of life.



The future for adults with special needs is unclear, especially for those without the vocational or social skills to seek and secure competitive employment. California is setting the pace nationally to secure successful adult life experiences including postsecondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult education, independent living, and community participation. The student who is outside the mainstream, whether there is a disability, a language difference, or a cultural divergence, needs the active support of education to be an active and successful citizen while staying in school and after graduation.

Transition services encompass the purposeful, organized and outcome-oriented process which facilitates special education students' movement from school to employment becoming contributing members of society.

The implementation of the strategic plan strategies and activities will result in:

- Expansion of transition materials to cover ages 0-22
- Expansion of efforts to ensure that career/vocational goals, objectives, and opportunities are provided to students as part of an ongoing transition effort, beginning at the elementary level and expanding at the secondary level
- Development of training manuals to be used as guides for ITP (Individualized Transition Plans) for students ages 14-22
- Shared responsibility among appropriate local, state, and private agencies to transition students over 18 years of age
- Expansion of WorkAbility to reach an increased number of students
- Continues support of the Transition Partnership Project and WorkAbility II jointly with the Department of Rehabilitation
- Expansion of postsecondary follow-up of special education school leavers to measure the success of transition

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Establishment of interagency plan defining procedural and fiscal responsibilities among agencies for 18-22 year old students (State Departments of Education, Rehabilitation, Developmental Services, Mental Health, Employment Development, and Community Colleges, State Job Training Coordinating Council, and the California State University System.)

▲ Collection of data from transition efforts for students 14-22 in collaboration with other state agencies.

▲ Completion of evaluation report and follow-up data on 4,000 Project WorkAbility and other transition program graduates.

from high school campuses to age-appropriate settings within community-based programs

- Statutory and fiscal reform to lower interagency barriers and constraints to transition
- Collaborative fiscal support of transition activities
- Training materials and support for families, community members, business leaders, educators, and others who are involved in providing for successful transition

STATEWIDE STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Design, field test, and implement—in collaboration with other agencies—a shared responsibility for the transition of students over 18 years of age into age-appropriate, community-based programs.**
- **Implement the revised Transition Plan which is designed to link preschool, elementary, and middle school components with the secondary component of the transition model.**
- **Implement and sustain transition program strategies—WorkAbility I and II; Transition Partnership Project.**

Successful transition is more than employment. It can include completion of secondary education opportunities and graduation, appropriate postsecondary involvement, and appropriate involvement in the community in an independent or semi-independent setting. Expectations for students with disabilities in the past have been low and have resulted in lower employment rates and higher dropout rates than seen for students in general education. The Special Education Division challenges educators to set higher expectations for all students with disabilities.

To address this new area of concern is the Strategic Plan goal: *California students with disabilities, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background, will be prepared academically, socially, and vocationally to become fully employed, contributing members of society, and to enjoy an appropriate quality of life.*

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Continued field test of transition activities for 14-22-year-old students, based on student leaver, outcome-oriented evaluation.

▲ Disseminate field support materials and training to support transition of students.

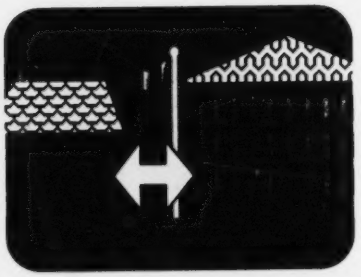
▲ Development of legislative proposal for statewide implementation of transition for 14-22 year old students.

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Full implementation of the California Transition model for students from birth through 22 years of age.

New and Effective Partnerships with Parents

GOAL:
Parents of special education students (including those from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds), will have the opportunity to participate in the education of their children and be able to influence the educational system.



To ensure the highest quality of education, it is a goal of special education to build and maintain effective collaborative relationships between parents and professionals by promoting meaningful parent involvement at a variety of levels.

This Strategic Plan will result in effective parent involvement and parent-professional collaboration which will be achieved through:

- Information and program materials that relate directly to parents and parent-professional collaboration such as published policy statements, brochures, bibliographies, facts on the benefits of parent involvement, and related training materials
- Demonstration projects that include comprehensive and systematic planning for parent involvement in educational change efforts at the school site level
- Exemplary programs that demonstrate effective parent involvement at a variety of levels
- Technical assistance for parents and education agencies
- Parent organizations such as SECACNOC and SELPA, Community Advisory Committees and Parent Information and Training Centers
- Inservice training programs utilizing Parent Training Modules developed by the Special Education Division to develop a cadre of trained parent-professional teams
- Conferences and training workshops on parent involvement and parent-professional collaboration
- Satellite teleconferences on issues of concern to parents

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Dissemination of policy on parent education, training, and involvement in special education.

▲ Dissemination of models, exemplary practices, and implementation sites that promote parent involvement and parent-professional collaboration at the state and local level through interactive satellite teleconferencing.

▲ Dissemination of support materials and training curriculum to assist the development of local programs and the implementation of exemplary practices.

▲ Dissemination of information and materials for parent and professionals to heighten awareness and enhance collaborative relationships.

▲ Coordination of annual statewide parent-professional collaboration conference.

Parent involvement leads to improvement in student success and plays a critically important role in a unified educational system. Barriers that inhibit parent involvement must be removed. This effort includes promoting a change in attitudes and skills on the part of both parents and professionals. In a rapidly changing school environment, educators and families are often working against a legacy of adversarial relationships and miscommunication while still holding the belief that parents must be more involved.

To help overcome these obstacles is the Strategic Plan goal: *Parents of special education students (including those from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds), will have the opportunity to participate in the education of their children and be able to influence the educational system.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Identify models and exemplary practices for effective parent involvement and parent-professional collaboration across all programs and at age levels 0-22 years which define parents as active partners with schools and include: (1) comprehensive, systematic planning for parent involvement, (2) recognition of parent involvement roles at a variety of levels: (3) effective communication systems between home and school, and (4) sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity.**
- **Identify program development sites to work collaboratively with the Department and various institutions of higher education to develop, test, refine, train, and assist in dissemination of effective models of parent involvement and parent-professional collaboration.**
- **Create field support materials and training curriculum based on assessed and identified needs of parents to support best practices in a comprehensive program of parent involvement.**
- **Collaborate with parent representatives to develop and review materials.**
- **Conduct an annual statewide conference on parent/professional collaboration that provides timely and pertinent information.**
- **Form a statewide cadre of informed and skilled training teams composed of parents and professionals to conduct application-level training using Special Education Division developed training materials.**
- **Produce interactive satellite teleconferences, Director's forums, and workshops that provide intensive training at a variety of levels to parent and professionals in various models, best practices and the skills necessary to implement parent involvement and parent/professional collaboration.**
- **Support statewide parent information and training networks which promote parent professional collaboration in school and community.**
- **Increase parent participation in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Advisory Committee.**
- **Identify emerging and changing parent needs for training and education through the comprehensive system of personnel development statewide needs assessment .**
- **Disseminate models and best practices for effective parent involvement and parent/professional collaboration.**
- **Develop policy and needed regulation with the involvement of parents at the state and local levels.**
- **Study the effectiveness, impact, and benefits of a comprehensive and coordinated program of parent involvement.**

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Establishment of trained cadres of parent-professional teams.

▲ Continued presentations of satellite telecommunications on issues of concern to parents.

▲ Continued development and refinement of materials and information.

▲ Statewide dissemination of model programs and exemplary practices.

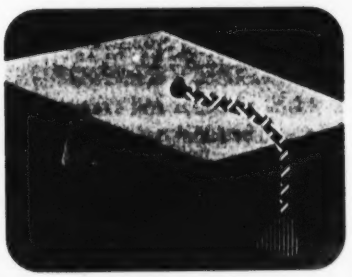
1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Institutionalization of parent involvement policies.

▲ Institutionalization of parent education and training programs in all SELPAs.

Special Education Personnel: *Sufficient Numbers, Qualified*

GOAL:
There will be sufficient numbers of qualified education personnel working with students with disabilities.



Education that is effective and of high quality requires teachers who are effective and well-trained. Educational decision makers and those who staff and plan programs need reliable information to track, monitor, and project personnel needs now and for the future. An accurate, reliable database could create an opportunity for those concerned with teacher training and hiring and programs to interact in a collaborative manner to analyze personnel needs.

California's size and complexity require increased and intensive use of technology to meet the diverse training, information, and recruitment needs. Methods to reach, recruit, and renew may utilize interactive satellite teleconference trainings, and other new and innovative practices and media. It will also involve a more detailed analysis of student and teacher trends. The types of placement of students, growth in programs, and movement across programs needs to be tracked.

Preservice and inservice training curriculum must include materials and content which will prepare tomorrow's teachers and specialists to succeed with tomorrow's students. Preservice trainers can develop a new work force of people who have the necessary certification and the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful with students. The process of inservice training could also reinforce those learnings and capabilities of staff, and be the vehicle to refresh and revitalize educators.

Implementing this strategic plan will result in the following outcomes:

- Development of a database to be used for effective planning and decision making
- More availability of fully certified personnel in all programs
- Collaborative planning by educational leaders
- Retention of qualified personnel who are continually refreshed and revitalized through inservice opportunities

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Establishment of database of information on national teacher supply and demand trends.

▲ Development of a system for identification and dissemination of accurate data regarding statewide teacher surplus and shortage.

▲ Disseminate report with recommendations for CTC and Special Education Division on ways to alleviate teacher shortages, including recruitment, retention, and use of certifications and waivers.

▲ Implement comprehensive recruitment plan and materials for implementation.

▲ Establishment of a cadre of career counselors knowledgeable about special education career options.

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Continued analysis of statewide data regarding teacher surplus and shortage and projections for training needs.

- Staff who understand the value of collaboration with each other, the community, and parents
- Staff sensitive to the unique learning needs of students caused by environmental factors, cultural or linguistic differences, and learning disabilities

There is a shortage of qualified teachers in many areas. Special Education is an area that is especially vulnerable to an inadequate supply of teachers. Many special educators move to general education after only a few years of teaching, while others use their skills to move into areas of school administration or private consulting. Still others, as in teaching in general, choose other careers. School administrators have joined teacher training institutions, the Department of Education, and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to analyze the demand for staff to teach special education classes, and to begin to develop strategies for recruitment and retention.

Recognition of these needs and initial efforts leads us to the strategic plan goal: *There will be sufficient numbers of qualified education personnel working with students with disabilities.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Conduct forums utilizing state and national experts to provide information about national teacher supply and demand trends.**
- **Identify areas of statewide teacher shortage and surplus by geography and credential using existing department database information.**
- **Identify effective strategies for recruitment.**
- **Develop a plan and materials for recruitment of special education personnel at the secondary and institution of higher educational (IHE) levels, in the community, and out of state in collaboration with the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Advisory Committee (CSPDAC).**
- **Implement a recruitment plan in collaboration with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, local districts, and IHEs.**
- **Develop and disseminate preservice training materials which promote special education as a career choice.**
- **Coordinate information about availability of teachers statewide.**
- **Increase the numbers of trained special education staff through Comprehensive System of Personnel Development activities with increasing emphasis on the use of technology in training delivery.**
- **Promote inservice activities which foster teacher renewal and retention.**
- **Adapt or develop training curriculum in the highest areas of need for emergency credentials and/or waivers.**
- **Adapt or develop curriculum and begin training in special education for school site administrators.**
- **Conduct statewide needs assessment through CSPDAC to identify changing teacher and administrator needs for training.**

▲ Continued dissemination of training curricula and materials which provide for teacher renewal.

▲ Increased numbers of special education personnel in training or hired and reduce shortage by 75%.

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Institutionalization of a credential structure which supports an enhanced ability of teachers to enter the profession.

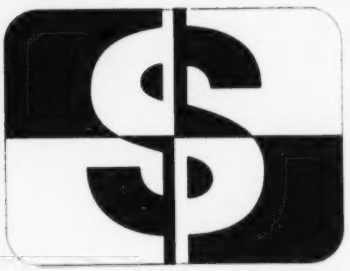
▲ Institutionalization of preservice teacher training programs that promote preparation for special education.

▲ Increased numbers of special education personnel hired or in training.

▲ Elimination of all special education teacher shortages in California.

An Equitable, Responsive Funding Model

GOAL:
A funding model will be developed that reflects sensitivity to providing services to students with a wide variety of needs in multiple settings that is equitable, flexible, and easy to administer and understand.



The current system of funding for special education has always had some fundamental problems connected with it:

- The base upon which the model was developed was faulty. Calculations were made and submitted by local districts which were not truly reflective of the costs of educating individuals with exceptional needs.
- There was, and continues to be, inadequate funds available to appropriately serve the needs of special education students.
- The system is complex, difficult initially to administer, and is almost impossible to understand by the lay person.
- The system is program based and not student based. Monies are allocated to the program and are not necessarily budgeted to meet the individual needs of students within the programs.
- Costs of operating programs have escalated at a much higher rate than has been captured by the funding model. The funding model, therefore, has not been responsive to the growing discrepancy between costs, entitlements, and allocations.
- The current funding model is based on the numbers of students identified, assessed, and served. It does not allow for the expenditures of funds for prevention and support activities such as planning and collaboration.

There are several key components which should be a part of any good funding model. These components will result in the development of a funding model that includes:

Equitability: a model that allows for an equitable entitlement process founded around the tenets of California's Serrano-Priest decision, and that is reviewed periodically to ensure that equity continues to exist several years after adoption.

OUTCOMES:

1990-1991 Outcomes

▲ Analysis of the funding processes cataloged by various LEAs.

▲ Analysis of the funding concepts used by various LEAs which could lead to the development of an alternate funding model.

▲ Development of revised special education funding models.

▲ Analysis of effects on programs as alternative funding models are piloted.

1991-1992 Outcomes

▲ Analysis of results of revised funding model from year one.

Responsiveness: a model that allows for a flexible budgeting process to occur at the local level where monies can be budgeted to serve the multiple needs of individuals, and that is more student-oriented than program-focused.

Ease of Understandability—Simplicity: a model that is easily understood by both fiscal and program administrators, teaching staff, parents, and others associated with special education.

As reforms in special education are proposed, piloted, and evaluated, there exists a need to re-examine the special education funding model. As the identification, assessment, and service delivery models change, as well as educating students in the least restrictive environment, there needs to exist a funding model which will facilitate, not hamper, these attempts at educational reform.

It is the need for a new model that has led the strategic plan to establish our goal: *A funding model will be developed that reflects sensitivity to providing services to students with a wide variety of needs in multiple settings that is equitable, flexible, and easy to administer and understand.*

Statewide Strategies and Activities

- **Collect and analyze current fiscal data regarding special education costs in assessment, caseload (SDC, RSP, DIS), and support services.**
- **Develop alternative models and research activities in the areas of prevention, assessment, instruction, review, and the IEP process.**
- **Analyze a variety of alternative funding proposals submitted.**

1992-Beyond Outcomes

▲ Continued revisions to newly developed funding model.

▲ Development of legislative proposal to institutionalize funding model.

▲ Institutionalization of revised funding model.